

Amendments to the Claims:

Please cancel claims 24, 51 and 57, and please amend claims 22, 23, 25, 49 and 62 as follows:

1-21. (Canceled)

22. (Currently Amended) A method for finishing a surface of a protective package on a microelectronic device, comprising:

chemically etching at least a portion of the surface of the package to remove a layer of material from the package and form a marking surface; ~~and~~
cleaning residual materials and/or chemicals from the package after terminating the etching of the package surface; and
marking the marking surface after cleaning residual materials and/or chemicals from the package.

23. (Currently Amended) A method for finishing a surface of a protective package on a microelectronic device, comprising:

etching at least a portion of the surface of the package to remove a layer of material from the package; ~~and~~
cleaning residual materials and/or chemicals from the package after terminating the etching of the package surface; and
marking the surface of the package after cleaning residual materials and/or chemicals from the package;

wherein etching the package includes chemically etching at least a portion of the surface of the package with hydrofluoric acid, and wherein cleaning the package includes rinsing at least a portion of the package with de-ionized water.

24. (Canceled)

25. (Currently Amended) A method for finishing a surface of a protective package on a microelectronic device, comprising:

etching at least a portion of the surface of the package to remove a layer of material from the package;

cleaning residual materials and/or chemicals from the package after terminating the etching of the package surface; ~~and~~

controlling the depth of the etching by determining a depth at which the chemical etching will have removed sufficient blemishes from the package surface to attain a preselected surface finish and terminating the etching at the depth where the preselected surface finish has been attained; and

marking the surface of the package after cleaning residual materials and/or chemicals from the package.

26-48. (Canceled)

49. (Currently Amended) A method for simultaneously finishing a surface of a protective package on each of a plurality of microelectronic devices carried on a common substrate, comprising:

etching at least a portion of the surface of each package to remove a layer of material from the package;

cleaning residual materials and/or chemicals from the package after terminating the etching of the package surface;

marking the surface of the package after cleaning residual materials and/or chemicals from the package; and

after terminating the etching, cutting the common substrate to separate the microelectronic devices from one another.

50. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 49 wherein etching the surface of each package includes chemically etching at least a portion of the surface of the package with hydrofluoric acid, and wherein cleaning the package includes rinsing at least a portion of the package with de-ionized water.

51. (Canceled)

52. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 49, further comprising:
controlling the depth of the etching by determining a depth at which the chemical etching
will have removed sufficient blemishes from the package surface to attain a
preselected surface finish and terminating the etching at the depth where the
preselected surface finish has been attained.

53-55. (Canceled)

56. (Previously Presented) A method for packaging a microelectronic device,
comprising:

molding package compound at least partially around a microelectronic die in a mold to at
least partially encase the microelectronic die, leaving a surface blemish on a
marking surface of the mold compound;
removing the package from the mold;
prior to marking the marking surface, etching at least a portion of the marking surface to
remove a layer of material from the package;
terminating the etching when the surface blemish has been at least partially removed from
the package; and
marking the etched marking surface after terminating the etching.

57. (Canceled)

58. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 56, wherein etching the surface of
each package includes chemically etching at least a portion of the surface of the package with
hydrofluoric acid, and wherein cleaning the package includes rinsing at least a portion of the
package with de-ionized water.

59. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 56, further comprising:
controlling the depth of the etching by determining a depth at which the chemical etching will have removed sufficient blemishes from the package surface to attain a preselected surface finish and terminating the etching at the depth where the preselected surface finish has been attained.

60. (Previously Presented) A method for marking a surface of a protective resin package on a microelectronic device, comprising:
providing a plurality of microelectronic devices on a common substrate, each of the microelectronic devices including a protective resin package;
simultaneously etching at least a portion of the surface of each package to remove a layer of material from each package formed on the common substrate;
terminating the etching when a surface blemish on at least one of the packages has been at least partially removed from the package; and
applying a mark to each of the packages after terminating the etching.

61. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 60, wherein at least one of the microelectronic devices has been identified as having a resin package with a blemish on a primary marking surface of the package, and wherein the surface to be marked is the primary marking surface.

62. (Currently Amended) A method for packaging a microelectronic die carried on a substrate, comprising:
molding package compound at least partially around a microelectronic die in a mold to at least partially encase the microelectronic die, leaving a portion of the substrate exposed and leaving a surface blemish on a marking surface of the package compound;
removing the resulting package from the mold;

~~prior to marking the marking surface, positioning a masking member at least adjacent to a portion of the substrate such that the marking surface is not covered by the masking member;~~

prior to marking the marking surface, etching at least a portion of the marking surface to remove a layer of material from each package formed on the common substrate;
terminating the etching when the surface blemish has been at least partially removed from the package; and
marking the etched marking surface after terminating the etching.